

## **ABSTRACT**

The present invention relates to novel complexes of major histocompatibility complex (MHC) molecules and uses of such complexes. In one aspect, the invention relates to loaded MHC complexes that include at least one MHC molecule with a peptide-binding groove and a presenting peptide non-covalently linked to the MHC protein. In another aspect, the invention features single chain MHC class II peptide fusion complexes with a presenting peptide covalently linked to the peptide binding groove of the complex. MHC complexes of the invention are useful for a variety of applications including: 1) in vitro screens for identification and isolation of peptides that modulate activity of selected T cells, including peptides that are T cell receptor antagonists and partial agonists, and 2) methods for suppressing or inducing an immune response in a mammal.

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